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SUBJECT: KOSOVO: 2006 ANNUAL TERRORISM UPDATE

REF: STATE 175925

11. (U) The following submission provides Post's contribution to the Department's "Country Reports on Terrorism 2006."

BEGIN REPORT

12. (U) The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) continues to administer Kosovo pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1244, and Kosovo remains a steadfast member of the global coalition against terrorism. There have been no significant acts of international terrorism in Kosovo in 2006. Kosovo is not a sponsor of terrorism and does not provide safe haven to international terrorist organizations.

13. (U) The Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) and UNMIK continue to monitor suspected terrorist activity. UNMIK Police and Kosovo Police Service (KPS) monitor individuals entering Kosovo at official points of entry; a regulation adopted in 2005 requires persons entering Kosovo who are not employed by an international organization or liaison office to register with the KPS's Office of Foreign Registration.

14. (U) Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are of concern in Kosovo, and the PISG and UNMIK monitor NGOs suspected of funding Islamic extremist and Albanian extremist movements within Kosovo. Officials believe only several of the more than 400 NGOs operating in Kosovo are involved in suspicious activities, and they seek to prevent extremists from using NGOs to gain a foothold in Kosovo. Consequently, municipalities authorize NGOs' use of public facilities for religious gatherings only if the relevant religious community gives its consent. The Kosovo Islamic Community (KIC) reports that it evaluated about 20 applications of mostly foreign NGOs in 2006 and rejected four due to reservations about their proposed programs and participants. The KIC reports that it generally consents to religious gatherings of a cultural character, but rejects those involving preaching. With few exceptions, municipalities have respected KIC

positions when issuing their permits.

¶5. (U) UNMIK Police's Counterterrorism Task Force (CTTF) is primarily responsible for counterterrorism efforts in Kosovo. It has nine international police officers and reports that its objectives have recently shifted from reactive to preventive measures. It receives information and analysis support from the UNMIK Central Intelligence Unit (CIU) and the UNMIK Police Intelligence Liaison Unit (ILU). In October 2006, with UNMIK Police's support and guidance, the KPS established its own counterterrorism unit (CTU). Six officers are currently assigned to the KPS CTU and are receiving training. The KPS plans to expand the CTU in four phases to be completed by September 2007. It will eventually have 35 officers. In January 2007, upon completion of phase one of the expansion plan, the CTU will be incorporated into the work of UNMIK's CTTF.

¶6. (U) UNMIK and the PISG are also involved in the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Internal Security Sector Review (ISSR) process, which is scheduled to conclude in December 2006 with the publication of a comprehensive analysis of short- and long-term needs for institutional development of Kosovo's security sector. Initiated by the UK Ministry of Defense in 2004 and later taken over by UNDP, the ISSR proposes concrete measures to increase Kosovo's capacity to prevent such future strategic threats as terrorism, inter-ethnic extremism, organized crime and corruption.

¶7. (U) UNMIK established the Ministries of Justice (MOJ) and Internal Affairs (MOIA) in December 2005, launching the process of gradual transfer of police and justice competencies to the PISG. Following a successful interim progress review, UNMIK assigned an additional set of

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competencies to the two new ministries in April 2006. The MOJ and MOIA should play an important role in counterterrorism as they gain more competencies. Nevertheless, UNMIK retains the ultimate authority in law enforcement and continues to exercise operational control over the KPS.

¶8. (U) Despite these advances, Kosovo lacks an official domestic intelligence collection organization, and its counterterrorism efforts are also hampered by weak border control. The Kosovo border police service is young, lacks basic equipment and only has a mandate to patrol the green border (areas where there are no official, manned borders or boundary gates) from two to three kilometers from the actual border and administrative boundary lines. NATO KFOR has roving teams patrolling the green border right up to the border and administrative boundary lines, but terrorists could exploit numerous passable roads leading into Kosovo which lack borders or boundary gates. Border police are also poorly paid and thus are susceptible to corruption.

¶9. (U) Witness intimidation is also an obstacle to combating terrorism in Kosovo. While there have been no new terrorism cases this year, UNMIK's Department of Justice (DOJ) reports that intimidation of witnesses during investigation and trial phases has hampered current terror prosecutions. According to UNMIK DOJ, a weak domestic witness protection program and the absence of witness relocation agreements with other countries make it difficult to convince witnesses to come forward. Moreover, international officials still handle terrorism cases due to fears over local officials' susceptibility to intimidation.

¶10. (U) While Kosovo officials struggled to bring the perpetrators of terrorist acts to justice in 2006, domestic extremists, acting individually or in groups, continued to commit inter-ethnic violence and threaten public security and order. In early December, groups of armed, masked men reportedly presenting themselves as members of the Albanian National Army (AKSH) intermittently stopped pedestrians and

vehicles in western Kosovo to check their identification documents. These incidents occurred in the same area and bore a striking resemblance to those involving a group calling itself the Kosovo Independence Army (UPK) that threatened public security in late 2005. On December 5, the masked men fired at KPS officers in the village of Gercine near Gjakove. These groups have not issued statements or made any public requests so far. AKSH's Tirana-based spokesman Gafurr Adili told Kosovo media that these groups are not affiliated with the AKSH.

¶11. (U) AKSH made its first and sole public proclamation in Kosovo at a commemoration for two former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) fighters in the central Drenica region in 2004. Previously, it has been active in western Macedonia and southern Serbia. It calls for the unification of all Albanian-inhabited lands into one state through armed struggle, but claims its units do not operate anywhere in Kosovo except in the north, which it considers to be under Serbian occupation. Although there have been numerous instances in recent years of masked men, dressed in black blocking roads, Ardili has repeatedly rejected their AKSH affiliation. In November, the town of Glogovac in Drenica was covered in leaflets distributed on AKSH's behalf denouncing the appearance of armed masked groups attired in uniforms bearing AKSH insignia in the region.

END REPORT

¶12. (U) Significant incidents in 2006 have included:

-- January 4 - A rocket-propelled grenade hit a regular local bus to Belgrade near Suhareke, but did not explode. There were 57 passengers on board (26 Albanians, 21 Gorani, eight Bosniaks, one Turk and one Chinese national), and none were

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injured.

-- January 6 - An Albanian and a Serb working as security guards at the municipal court liaison office in Gracanica were shot and wounded in a drive-by shooting. Two Kosovo Albanians were convicted.

-- May 6 - Shots were fired at the vehicle driven by the secretary of the Diocese of Raska and Prizren near Zvecan.

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Two Serb KPS members are suspected of involvement in the incident.

-- May 11 - A Serb was killed and another was seriously wounded in an armed robbery at a petrol station in the village of Grabovac near Zvecan.

-- June 1 - A Serb was killed in an ambush on the Zvecan-Zitkovac road.

-- June 19 - An elderly Serb returnee was found killed in his house in Klina.

-- August 26 - A hand grenade was thrown at the Dolce Vita Cafe in north Mitrovica, injuring nine people, including a British national. A 16-year-old Kosovo Albanian was detained in connection with the incident.

-- September 11 - An explosion in the village of Shtupelj near Klina destroyed a Serb returnee family's reconstructed house.

-- September 15 - A bomb exploded in the parked private vehicle of Minister of Internal Affairs Fatmir Rexhepi in Gjilan.

-- September 16 - A bomb exploded in the parked official vehicle of an advisor to Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Lutfi

Haziri.

-- September 17 - A bomb exploded in the parked vehicle of a local businessman in Ferizaj.

-- September 19 - Four Serb returnees were injured, one seriously, when a grenade was thrown at their apartment in Kline.

-- October 4 - A bomb exploded in the yard of the house of an advisor and confidante of DPM Lutfi Haziri in Gjilan.

-- December 8 - An explosive device destroyed part of the railroad tracks at the entrance to the bridge in the village of Mihalic near Vushtrri. A train that regularly carries Serbs who live north of the Ibar River to the Serbian enclaves south of the Ibar River was due to cross the bridge roughly an hour later.

¶13. (U) Post's point of contact on this issue is political officer Tracey Thornton. She can be reached at 381-38-549-526, ext. 3110 or by e-mail at thorntontr@state.gov.

¶14. (SBU) U.S. Office Pristina clears this cable in its entirety for release to U.N. Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari.
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